

Hocking is 'Champion of the Arts'

A professor in the Department of Cinema was among four recipients of an award by the New York Foundation for the Arts. Ralph Hocking was presented the Foundation's annual Champion of the Arts award at a benefit dinner held last month in New York City.

The award recognizes organizations and individuals who have shown commitment to the arts community and the needs of the individual artist. The Foundation, in the program of its awards ceremony, called Hocking a pioneer experimentalist in the field of video art. He is also recognized for helping to make rapidly evolving media techniques available to hundreds of individual artists.

Hocking began at the University in 1968 as a lecturer in television production. Current video courses were developed from the initial Students Experiments in Television program established by Hocking in 1969. The loosely structured program involved special student productions featuring different aspects of University life.

In 1971, Hocking incorporated his own Experimental Television Center in Owego — one of only a handful of its kind in the country. Hocking says that the start up costs for the center came from "a grant from the New York State Council of the Arts. We then moved off campus to work with the community as well as the students."

In his work with video art, Hocking, in the past has defined his craft as "the non-commercial use of video tape for artistic expression." He maintains that video art is not to be confused with work such as rock videos and the like. According to Hocking, the objective of an artist is to be thoughtful, not necessarily to be popular.

In recognizing Hocking's work, the New York Foundation for the Arts called him "a

democratizer of video technologies and a champion of lower cost alternatives to television studio production." In a letter to Hocking, the Foundation's Executive Director Theodore S. Berger said, "we at the Foundation are aware of your strong commitment to the field of video and of your achievements and we want the rest of the arts community to know."

The Foundation award is the second honor received by Hocking during this school year. Last October, he and the Experimental Television Center were selected to receive an award from the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Incorporated.

— Paul Hollie



Photo by Herman Paikoff
Ralph Hocking